

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A particulate and fluid tight vent filter seal for a sterilization container having container planar members that enclose an interior space wherein one of the container planar members is a vent planar member that is a generally flat member that has an interior surface within the interior space, ~~and~~ an exterior surface and a container vent ~~through~~ by which sterilization media can pass through the vent planar member into the interior space of the container, and a sheet filter ~~inside~~ disposed within the interior space of the container ~~covering the container vent~~ comprising:

a vent recess ~~within~~ formed within the vent planar member and completely surrounding the container vent wherein said vent recess ~~is~~ has an arcuate concave surface relative to in the vent planar member interior surface and further wherein said sheet filter ~~is disposed over the interior surface and~~ extends over the entire container vent and said surrounding vent recess ~~and the container vent~~;

a gasket secured wholly within said vent recess and in contact with substantially the entire concave surface of said vent recess where ~~#~~ said gasket is protected against damage; and

a generally planar filter cover that is disposed to move into engagement with the vent planer member and having a cover vent by which sterilization media can pass through said filter cover, said planar filter cover further comprising ~~having a planar surface and a cover vent~~

with a generally convex cover ridge formed in said ~~planar surface~~
surrounding filter cover wherein said cover ridge completely surrounds
the cover vent ~~wherein~~ and said cover ridge is coextensive with said vent
recess and sized to at least partially fit into said vent recess, whereby
when said vent recess and said cover ridge are aligned and said filter
cover is operatively secured in place, a positive force is applied to said
cover ridge forcing it toward and in engagement with said vent recess,
whereby said cover ridge is forced against said sheet filter which, in turn,
is forced against said gasket whereby said cover ridge, said gasket and
said vent recess thereby forming form a particulate and fluid tight a seal
surrounding that surrounds both the container vent and said cover vent
which prevents fluid from entering or leaving the sterilization container
through the seal.

2. (Previously Presented) The vent filter seal of claim 1 further
comprising:

a protective vent ridge extending above the exterior surface and
surrounding the container vent.

3. (Previously Presented) The vent filter seal of claim 2 wherein said
protective vent ridge is the opposite side of said vent recess.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) The vent filter seal of claim 4 1 wherein said
cover vent and the container vent are spaced apart a distance greater
than the thickness of the filter therebetween when said filter cover is
operatively secured in place whereby lateral movement of sterilization
media between the container vent and said cover vent is facilitated.

6. (Currently Amended) The vent filter seal of claim 5 wherein the container vent is a pattern of holes through the ~~container~~ vent planar member and further wherein said cover vent is a pattern of holes through said filter cover within the area defined by said cover ridge wherein the holes of the container vent and said holes of said filter cover are offset relative to each other when said filter cover is operatively secured in place.

7-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) The vent filter seal of claim 1 wherein said gasket has a generally ~~concave~~ arcuate cross-section.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously Presented) The vent filter seal of claim 1 wherein the vent planar member is in a removable container lid and said gasket is exposed when said filter cover is removed to change the filter.